

**- Paycheck Fairness Act Would Eliminate Gender-Based Wage Gap -** Washington, DC – U.S. Rep. John Hall (D-NY19) fought pay discrimination last week by voting to close legal loopholes that have allowed some employers to continue wage discrimination against women, as well as provide women with tools to fight pay discrimination when it does occur. H.R. 1338, the Paycheck Fairness Act, passed the House by a vote of 247-178.

"Equal pay is an issue of fundamental fairness," said Hall. "The fact that many women are still paid less for the same work is unacceptable."

Although the gender-based pay gap has been reduced in the 45 years since Congress passed the 1963 Fair Pay Act, women still make only 77 cents to every dollar earned by men, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. This shortfall can add up to between \$700,000 and \$2 million in wages lost over a lifetime, according to the AFL-CIO.

The Paycheck Fairness Act would:

- Require that employers seeking to justify unequal pay bear the burden of proof;
- Prohibit employer retaliation against employees for sharing salary information with co-workers;
- Put gender-based discrimination sanctions on equal footing with other forms of wage discrimination – such as discrimination based on race, disability or age – by allowing women to sue for compensatory and punitive damages; and
- Enhance the Department of Labor's outreach and training efforts to help employers eliminate unfair wage disparities.

"Today, women in the workforce face lower wages, higher unemployment, as well as a higher likelihood than men of being hurt by the subprime mortgage crisis," said Hall. "We need to make the wage gap a thing of the past so it does not become our daughters' future." -30-